

Georgia for the past 38 years. Throughout those years, his operation has grown to over 2,000 acres and includes several different crops, such as cotton, peanuts, corn, watermelons, and cantaloupes.

Armond's service and contribution to the agriculture community go well beyond the fields and dirt roads of South Georgia. Armond is the current chairman of the Georgia Peanut Commission, which represents over 7,000 peanut farmers in Georgia. Conducting programs that deal with the research and promotion of Georgia peanuts. Armond is also a board member of the American Peanut Council, which is responsible for peanut farmers across the country. Armond is not alone with his service to the agriculture community. He and his wife, Brenda, manage Morris Agricultural Services. Morris Agricultural Services is a USDA-approved peanut buying point and it also provides South Georgia farmers with chemicals and fertilizer.

Armond will join seven other state winners at the Sunbelt Agricultural Expo, which is held in my hometown of Moultrie, Georgia, in October. Armond and the other state winners will be recognized at the Expo, and one of them will be named the Lancaster Sunbelt Expo Southeastern Farmer of the Year.

Agriculture is very important to South Georgia and Armond represents the type of farmer the agriculture community needs in the future. He has helped out his fellow farmers and his community throughout his 38 years of farming, and I know that this help will continue.

Mr. Speaker, I hope you will join me in recognizing and congratulating Armond Morris on his outstanding achievements and service to our nation.

INTRODUCTION OF H.R. 5215, THE
"CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION
PROTECTION AND STATISTICAL
EFFICIENCY ACT OF 2002"

HON. STEPHEN HORN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 25, 2002

Mr. HORN. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to introduce on behalf of myself, Mr. SAWYER and Mrs. MALONEY, the proposed "Confidential Information Protection and Statistical Efficiency Act of 2002."

This bill would implement a pledge made by the President in his Management Agenda to improve Federal statistical programs. The bill, which the Administration drafted and supports, builds upon legislation that I introduced in the 106th Congress. That bill, H.R. 2885, the "Statistical Efficiency Act of 1999," received strong bipartisan support and was approved by the full House. Similar to that bill, H.R. 5215, it has two primary objectives. One is to enable the Federal Government's three principal statistical agencies—the Bureau of the Census, the Bureau of Labor Statistics, and the Bureau of Economic Analysis—to share the business data they collect. This shared information would substantially enhance the accuracy of economic statistics by resolving serious data inconsistencies that now exist. It would also reduce reporting burdens on the businesses that supply those data.

The second and equally important objective of this bill is to ensure that the confidential

data that citizens and businesses provide to Federal agencies for statistical purposes are subject to uniform and rigorous protections against unauthorized use. Accurate statistical data are essential to informed public and private decision-making in a host of important areas. This data make vital contributions to understanding the Nation's economy and its many facets, such as the impact of technology on productivity growth. The Nation's core economic indicators—the Gross Domestic Product and other key statistical aggregates—form the cornerstone of Federal budgetary and monetary policy.

Yet, growing data anomalies and inconsistencies raise questions about the accuracy of our economic statistics. For example, the Gross Domestic Product has recently experienced a historically high measurement error by about \$200 billion. Such serious data inconsistencies affect the Census Bureau and the Bureau of Labor Statistics, and call into question the accuracy with which these agencies track industry output, employment and productivity trends. For example, during the last economic census in 1997, the Bureau of Labor Statistics reported payroll data in the information technology sector that were 13 percent higher than the data reported by the Census Bureau. There was a 14 percent disparity in the payroll data reported by these two agencies for the motor freight, transportation and warehousing industries.

This bill would remove the statutory barriers that now prevent the Census Bureau, the Bureau of Labor Statistics and the Bureau of Economic Analysis from sharing and comparing statistical data. According to the Administration, this would largely eliminate the anomalies that now exist in Federal statistics data and thereby greatly enhance their quality.

The bill would also eliminate much of the duplicative data collection that now occurs. Multiple agencies have a critical need for the same information but are prohibited from sharing it. Allowing these agencies to share this information will ease reporting burdens on businesses.

Let me emphasize several important features of the data-sharing provisions of the bill. First, the data-sharing provisions apply only to the three agencies I have mentioned—the Census Bureau, the Bureau of Labor Statistics and the Bureau of Economic Analysis. The data-sharing provisions would not extend to other Federal agencies. Second, the bill's provisions apply only to the sharing of business data. They do not extend to household and demographic data that individual citizens provide to the Federal Government.

Third, the enhanced data-sharing can be used only for statistical purposes. Fourth, the data-sharing will be closely controlled under written agreements that specify: which data is to be shared; the statistical purposes for which the data can be used; the individuals who are authorized to receive the data; and appropriate security safeguards.

As I mentioned earlier, the other part of the bill would enhance the protection of data that businesses and citizens provide to the Federal Government on a confidential basis. In contrast to the bill's narrow data-sharing authorities, its confidentiality protections are very broad. They apply to all Federal agencies that collect data for statistical purposes from businesses or individuals under a pledge of confidentiality.

The bill provides a clear and consistent standard for the use of confidential statistical information. Specifically, it prohibits the Federal Government from using such information for any non-statistical purpose. The bill defines a prohibited non-statistical purpose as including the use of data in individually identifiable form for any administrative, regulatory, law enforcement, adjudicative or other purpose that affects the rights, privileges or benefits of the person or organization supplying the information.

The bill would also prohibit the disclosure of such information under the Freedom of Information Act. This bill would provide appropriate safeguards to ensure that data supplied under a pledge of confidentiality are used only for statistical purposes. It imposes criminal penalties on Federal employees or agents who willfully disclose information in violation of the bill's requirements.

The bill, thus, provides one uniform set of confidentiality protections to supplant the ad hoc statutory protections that now exist. It also establishes statutory protections in some areas where no such protections currently exist.

The bill's enhanced confidentiality protections will improve the quality of Federal statistics by encouraging greater cooperation on the part of respondents. Even more important, these protections ensure that the Federal Government does not abuse the trust of those who provide data to it under a pledge of confidentiality.

Mr. Speaker, the Confidential Information Protection and Statistical Efficiency Act of 2002 makes important, common sense and long overdue improvements in our Nation's statistical programs. It is a bipartisan, good Government measure that has the Administration's strong support. I urge my colleagues to join with us to achieve prompt enactment of the bill.

IN TRIBUTE TO THOMAS J.
REARDON

HON. ROGER F. WICKER

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 25, 2002

Mr. WICKER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a dedicated public servant and a leader in the field of higher education in the state of Mississippi. On August 15, 2002, University of Mississippi Dean of Students Dr. Thomas J. (Sparky) Reardon will celebrate 25 years of faithful service to the state of Mississippi and to his alma mater.

Dr. Reardon began his career in university administration as coordinator of pre-admissions and was later promoted to the post of associate director of student services. He assumed the job of dean of students in 2001. Dr. Reardon has been a tremendous influence on the lives of two generations of students during his distinguished career at Ole Miss. His leadership and experience have been assets during the tenure of three chancellors and countless faculty and staff members over the past quarter century.

He is a well-established professional in the field of Greek life on campus. He was recognized nationally in 1987 with the Association of Fraternity Advisors' Distinguished Service